



Bridger Bugler

F O R T B R I D G E R S T A T E H I S T O R I C S I T E

Superintendent's Desk



Fort Bridger State
Historic Site
Superintendent
Linley Mayer

The creek has mostly melted, the birds are back, and the ground squirrels are waking from their long winter nap. As you can see, we are excited that spring has arrived and we are looking forward to our summer season.

COVID-19 has affected everyone and we are hoping that you are staying safe. Due to this unprecedented situation and pursuant to the Governor's order and directive, all of the fort's buildings are closed to public access. The grounds remain open as long as six feet social distancing continues to be practiced by all visitors.

We are still working to protect, preserve, and promote the fort while providing educational and interpretive opportunities. One of the ways we are continuing to do this is through posts and videos on the fort's website and social media pages. Stay tuned to learn how to dance the Virginia Reel, play along with Captain's Coming, and more.

We don't know how long the buildings may need to stay closed, but we will do our best to be a bright spot, and we can't wait to see everyone when all of this is over.

Keep your eyes and ears open on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the fort's website to discover the latest news and all that we will have to offer. To receive a mailed or emailed copy of this newsletter stop by the fort (after we are open again), call, or email me at linley.mayer@wyo.gov.

Dispatch from the District

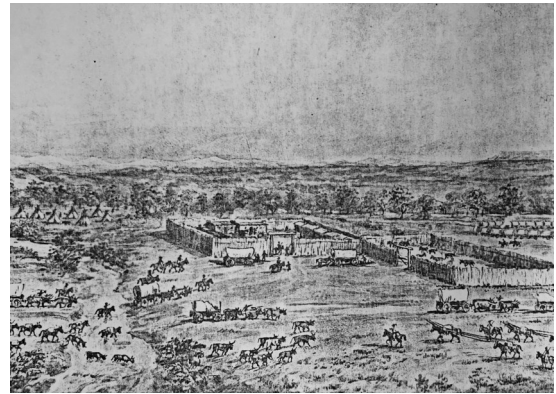
After two years as Superintendent of Fort Bridger and two more years as Shoshone District Manager, I recently accepted the position of Manager of the Wyoming Office of Outdoor Recreation, which is still part of the Parks, Historic Sites, and Trails Division, so I won't be going that far away, and I do plan to keep helping the Fort however I can in my new capacity. It will be sad, however, to be less somewhat less connected to the fort than I have been in recent years. On the other hand, Wyoming is facing some serious fiscal challenges, and I am excited about the prospect of outdoor recreation being part of the solution. Millions of people visit Wyoming each year for the scenery, the history, and the many recreational opportunities that we offer, making tourism and outdoor recreation the number two industry in the state. I'll be doing my best to promote these opportunities and to help create new ones to bring in even more visitors to the state, with the hope that they will stay for one more night, and eat one more cheeseburger. Don't worry, Wyoming is big enough to handle it!

Thanks for your friendship and continuing support for Fort Bridger. I'll see you down the trail!
Chris Floyd

A POINT IN TIME

BY: MARTIN LAMMERS

In 1849, and in the midst of the “Gold Rush”, William Kelly packed-up and left the Midwest for California. Instead of searching for gold Kelly intended to establish a farm. Keeping a detailed journal along the way, Kelly and his group of emigrants traveled westward where they met Louis Vasquez just west of South Pass. Kelly describes Vasquez as a “*Frenchman, the partner of Mr. Bridger.*” During an evening’s conversation, though, Vasquez convinced Kelly and those traveling with him not to proceed by way of Fort Hall, but rather go to Fort Bridger and on to California by way of the Salt Lake.



Fort Bridger in 1847 on the Oregon Trail, showing the large corrals as described by those who utilized these enclosures. Photo taken from original painting by W.H. Jackson, 1929.

Arriving at Fort Bridger, William Kelly gave one of the lesser known, and unflattering, descriptions of the Bridger-Vasquez trading post. According to Kelly:

“I cannot imagine how the term fort came to be applied to those trading stations, for they have no one point of resemblance to such a structure; Fort Bridger being even more completely destitute than the others of any such feature. It is simply composed of a few log huts, closely huddled together.... In one of those Mr. Bridger lives with his Indian wife, M. Vasquez’ family occupied another, a third was a store and the fourth contained a good forge and a rude carpenter’s shop....”

In spite of his early hesitations, William Kelly was impressed with James Bridger himself, and spent some time talking with Bridger and learning of his life. Kelly writes in his journal:

“Mr. Bridger, though not forty years of age, has had more experience as a mountaineer than any other dweller amongst them, as he not only traded with the Indians at the fort, but, taking a pleasure himself in the sport of trapping, was in the habit of leaving his partner as the home manager, and spending a great deal of his time in roaming through the fastnesses (sic) of the wilderness, by which means he became intimate with every practicable route or locality that could be mentioned. He was excessively kind and patient with me in laying down the route to Salt Lake, taking the trouble... of drawing a chart, with charcoal on the door, of the country through which we were to travel.”

This reference is interesting in the respect that most biographies of James Bridger put his age in 1849 as 45.

Kelly traveled on to California, visited – and wrote about – the gold rush and general conditions in the far-west, established a farm, but eventually tired of California and ultimately returned to the Midwest.

These excerpts were taken from: “An excursion to California over the prairie, Rocky Mountains, and great Sierra Nevada. With a stroll through the diggings and ranches of that country. By William Kelly”.

Aunt Agony's Advice



Advice for men and women in the Victorian era (1837-1901) taken from *The Essential Handbook of Victorian Etiquette*.

Dear Aunt Agony,

I will be attending my first ball in the big city. I am from a frontier town, and I am visiting my Aunt in New York. I am unaccustomed to ball etiquette. Your response is deeply anticipated.

Sincerely,
Nervous Nelly

Dear Nervous Nelly,

Choosing the appropriate escort is of the utmost importance. He should be someone to whose manner you can trust. He will be your first dance partner, will see that you are provided partners for the following dances and will see to your enjoyment. Whom you dance with is your pleasure, my dear. He will also conduct you to supper and be ready to conduct you home whenever it shall please you.

Some general behavior to avoid:

- Never enter or cross the ball unattended
- Never be led into the ball by the hand, only by the arm
- Never select a gentleman to hold your bouquet, fan and gloves during the dance, unless he is your husband, escort or relative
- Never eat your supper in gloves
- Bring two pairs of white kid gloves
 - One pair for before supper
 - One pair for after supper

If you follow these simple rules, you will be fine at your first ball. Your aunt should be able to sooth your nervous nature as well. Good luck my dear.

Sincerely,
Aunt Agony

Hill, Thomas E. *The Essential Handbook of Victorian Etiquette*. California: Bluewood Books, 1994.

Then and Now

The Commanding Officer's Quarters (COQ) was built in 1884 as part of an expansion of the Fort Bridger military post that began in 1880. When Wyoming became a state in 1890, the military abandoned the post and its buildings were auctioned into private ownership. The COQ was purchased by the Rochford family and moved to the fort's entrance where it was used as a hotel along the Lincoln Highway until 1936. The state acquired the building some years later and reconstructed it in its original location on officer's row beginning in 1976. The restoration was completed and a dedication ceremony took place on June 8, 1984. The building has been open to Fort Bridger State Historic Site summer visitors ever since the dedication.



Meet Anjoli Mosier

Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Anjoli Mosier, and I am the new Office Specialist here at Fort Bridger State Historic Site.

As a native of Evanston since my childhood, I, as with all local fourth graders, took that class trip to the amazing fort. I must admit I was something of an incorrigible child who gave my teacher no end of grief about history and not understanding how it applied to me in my life, or how it would possibly affect my future (similar to my feelings about math...although those feelings never changed. Hmm.)

Seeing the fort in person and being able to walk around the grounds started to change that for me, especially seeing people dressed up in period attire. But, what really changed my perspective was when we took a little detour and stood ON the Oregon Trail. I mean, in computer labs we played the game, but other than that I had never given it much thought. When I actually stood on the trail I got overcome with emotion and could actually visualize families on the trail heading west in those moments, and it was an experience I will never forget. I became passionate about history- and the fort- from then on, and always dreamed of working here someday.

In May I transplanted to the valley with my three kids and three dogs, trying to find my new normal and was sent a link to this position by someone who knew how much I love this place, which was like a dream come true. My past career adventures include several years of journalism, column writing and photography at both the Bridger Valley Pioneer and the Uinta County Herald, private photography endeavors including weddings, maternity, family, senior and newborn for my friends and family. I have served as an AmeriCorps in sexual assault and family violence. Volunteerism is a priority in my life that I have tried to instill in my family. I currently am on the county suicide prevention coalition and the substance abuse coalition, I'm involved in the Uinta Non-Profits United organization and I help out with my daughter's Girl Scout troop when I can.



Calendar

April

April 11– Easter Egg Hunt

The regular hunt has been cancelled. The Mountain View Lion's Club is taking a poll on their Facebook page for a potential alternative.

May

May 1– Summer Season Begins

Open Daily 9-5- \$3 per resident, \$5 per non-resident, 17 and under free.

All of the historic buildings open and costumed staff explain the history of the fort. Starting June 1, take a guided sneak-peak into the rooms of several buildings at the fort to get a true feel for the buildings and what life was like in the mid-to-late eighteen hundreds.

May

May 25– Memorial Day Flag Raising Ceremony

8am– Free for the Ceremony

We remember those who lost their lives serving our country through a Flag Raising Ceremony conducted at the flag pole by volunteers from the American Legion and VFW. The ceremony includes a 21-gun salute and taps.

FORT BRIDGER STATE HISTORIC SITE

37000 Business Loop I-80
Po Box 35
Fort Bridger, WY 82933

Office: 307-782-3842
Cell: 307-870-8811

Website: wyoparks.state.wy.us



@fortbridgershs



**Improving Communities
and
Enriching Lives**



Fort Bridger's mission is to protect, preserve, and promote Fort Bridger State Historic Site while providing educational and interpretive opportunities for the citizens of Wyoming and visitors from around the nation and the world.



Become a Member

Become a Fort Bridger Historical Association or
Fort Bridger Rendezvous Association member today!



Fort Bridger Historical Association Mission:

The Fort Bridger Historical Association is a non-profit organization whose function is to promote, support, and preserve the Fort Bridger State Historic Site.

Yearly membership is \$50 and includes a membership in the Wyoming State Historical Society.

For more information or to join call 307-782-3842 or e-mail FBHA1843@gmail.com

Fort Bridger Rendezvous Association Mission:

The Fort Bridger Rendezvous Association is a non-profit organization to promote, educate, and re-live the history, culture and life ways of the Fur Trade Era of the American West 1790-1840.

Yearly membership is \$20.

For more information or to join visit fortbridgerrendezvous.net, call 801-635-4038, or e-mail FBRAINCA@hotmail.com